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DECLASSIFIED
Authority STATE letter APR 25 1979
By ... NARS, Date 7-25-79

~~TOP SECRET/EYES~~

March 8, 1963

Note to Mr. Helms:

The attached letter deliberately omits any change in the ground rules of our actions toward Laos and Cambodia, as well as any possibility of any major ground action against North Viet-Nam. This at least simplifies the problem for the moment.

We have given extensive thought to whether this should be loaded wholly onto CIA for the time being. Paul Warnke and I would both be troubled by the complications and tendency to bureaucratic views involved in bringing DIA in, and the corollary would appear to be at least formal exclusion of INR at this stage. Nonetheless, I would hope that Tom's expert people could consult quietly with your staff, so that their in-puts could be taken into account.

At this stage, none of us knows what the timing of decision-making will be. I think this again argues for a CIA-only paper at the outset, to be completed perhaps by next Wednesday night. When we look at that, and in light of all other factors as they have been developed, we could decide that it should become a full inter-agency paper.

We all know full well what a load this one may be, but I think we equally agree that this is a major decision -- and all of us felt that the materials so far submitted to the President had this conspicuous gap in them.

William P. Bundy

BA:WPBundy:ms ~~TOP SECRET/EYES~~

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Authority STATE letter APR 25 1979
By [illegible], NARS, Date 7-25-79

March 8, 1968

Dear Dick:

In consultation with the Secretary and Walt Rostow, we feel the need for a careful analysis by CIA and/or the Carver shop of current Communist strategy and the reactions in Hanoi, the Soviet Union, and Communist China to our own possible next moves. We are of course aware of your recent paper on future Communist strategy, as well as the various memoranda of 1 March (Questions Concerning the Situation in Vietnam), 29 February (Communist Alternatives in Vietnam), and 26 February (The Outlook in Vietnam). Elements in each of these papers are of course relevant to a single paper such as now proposed.

I would think that such a paper might open with a brief assessment of Hanoi's strategy and possible current view of the situation, including how they might proceed in the next six months and what their hopes and expectations might be.

It should then go on to assess their reactions, and those of the Soviets and Communist Chinese, to a broad range of action possibilities on our side at present. These possibilities might be defined as follows:

A. An early announcement of reinforcements on the order of 25,000 men, coupled with reserve calls and other measures adequate to make another 75,000 men available for deployment by the end of the year if required and later decided. The bombing would be stepped up as the weather improved, and would include some new targets, but would not include the mining of Haiphong or major urban attacks in Hanoi and Haiphong.

The Honorable
Richard Helms
Director of Central Intelligence

B. A similar announcement of immediate reinforcement action, coupled with greater actions than in A to raise our total force strength, making possible additional reinforcements of roughly 175,000 men before the end of 1968. Bombing program as in A.

C. Option A plus mining of Haiphong and/or significantly intensified bombing of urban targets in Hanoi and Haiphong areas.

D. Option B plus an intensified bombing program and/or mining of Haiphong.

Obviously, these are a rough cut, and the paper might choose to separate out the question of reaction to intensified urban bombing and/or the mining of Haiphong, if you consider that these would have a particular effect on Soviet reactions especially.

Major questions, on which there has been some disagreement, include the degree to which North Vietnam could reinforce in the South in response to reinforcement plans on our side, and of course the capabilities question having to do with whether the mining of Haiphong would seriously impede the flow of supplies to the South or otherwise effect North Vietnamese capabilities to a major degree and/or over a significant period. If the analysis on Haiphong indicates greater reliance on the Chinese routes, then obviously the question of impact of this on Sino-Soviet relations becomes crucial.

Moreover, it would be helpful to have your best judgment on the Soviet posture generally at the present time. Many of us are worried that they may in fact have moved to a harder line generally and be not merely unable, but perhaps even unwilling, to exert influence at any time toward a slowing down by Hanoi, much less any real move toward peace.

This gives you a large waterfront, but the questions are important and do not seem to us to be adequately covered in a single paper, as we now seem to require. You have Ambassador Thompson's cable and a staff job from INR already in the various papers distributed last weekend. Needless to say, the whole exercise should be done on the tightest need-to-know basis. We do not envisage bringing in the other agencies at this stage, but I am keeping Tom Hughes informed, and may ask his separate judgment on some points.

Sincerely,

William P. Bundy